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LETTER DATED 17 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement of the Spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, dated 12 March, Juche 87 (1998).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) LI Hyong Chol
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement of the Spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, issued on 12 March, Juche 87 (1998)

Of late, the situation on the Korean peninsula has become further strained owing to the reckless manoeuvres of the United States of America in pursuance of its arms build-up in south Korea.

While it speaks of a fictitious "surprise attack" from one quarter and of a security "vacuum", with the impetus of the recent Iraqi crisis, the United States is introducing en masse the latest military equipment into south Korea and raising a ruckus of war preparations against us.

As has already been reported, Mr. Tilelli, Commander of the United States forces in south Korea, told the National Security Committee of the United States House of Representatives on 4 March that the latest-type commanding aircraft, J. Stars, had been "confirmed, as a result of its first use in military exercises, to be useful in an emergency on the Korean peninsula" and that it would be deployed in the United States-south Korean combined forces soon.

In anticipation of a "case emergency", the United States intends to deploy for action in south Korea this commanding aircraft known as the "flying operation command post" for management functions in the combined operation of the overall forces along with the control functions of an air warning plane. This itself constitutes a very dangerous intention.

Earlier, the Commander of the United States Pacific Forces, Joseph Prueher, in a press interview on 20 February, admitted that the United States had brought in 25 F-15-E jet fighters and 2 AC-130 helicopter gunships to south Korea from the United States mainland. He alleged that the aircraft deployment in south Korea was necessary to "maintain an effective deterrent".

According to him, the United States has completed its long-distance attack training to strike us with B-52 strategic bombers taking off from its mainland, put one aircraft carrier on standby on a permanent basis to move immediately to the coast of the Korean peninsula and placed the United States forces of three services under war preparedness so that they can be reinforced and introduced into south Korea within 18 hours.

It is no longer a secret that the United States, in February alone, sent reinforcements of several fighter-bombers and two gunships to south Korea and has an offensive nuclear submarine under the United States Seventh Fleet in port at Jinhae.

The massive reinforcement of the latest type of military hardware in south Korea has been timed to coincide with the Iraq crisis. This cannot be construed otherwise than an extremely dangerous scheme to test their new "win-win strategy" for the first time on the Korean peninsula.

Even the high-ranking officials of the United States military are openly talking about this.

The United States has up to now continually repeated its catchphrase that it has an interest in the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula at the various rounds of negotiations with us.

However, all the facts show that the United States continues to conduct in full battle gear its war preparations against its adversary behind the scenes of the dialogue.

Such being the situation, this only leads us to reconsider the prospects of the upcoming "four-way talks" and other negotiations with the United States.

The reckless arms build-up of the United States is gravely placing us on a high state of alert. It is an outrageous violation of the DPRK-United States Agreed Framework on putting an end to the long-standing hostile relations between the two countries and improving the relations between them.

It is axiomatic that we cannot expect to carry on a genuine dialogue with an adversary that can only find opportunities to do harm to its counterpart, with a dagger hidden in its breast pocket.

The hostile acts committed by the United States against the DPRK require us to maintain a high degree of vigilance and keep at full preparedness to cope with both dialogue and war.

Since the United States continues to concentrate on its reckless attempt to beef up its armed forces with war preparations against the DPRK, we cannot but take countermeasures. And if the enemy dares to provoke us, our people and the revolutionary armed forces will deal a merciless death blow to the provokers and decisively foil their attempts to carry out their "win-win strategy".